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ABSTRACT

A child's language reflects his thought processes and his level of development. Motor, emotional, and language development all have a direct relationship to the child's cognitive functioning--each follows the pattern of moving from gross and loosely differentiated states to refined and differentiated systems. Research in early childhood education suggests that all learning is essentially motoric and that oral language is a manifestation of early motor and language training. Therefore, learning activities which incorporate emotional, motor, cognitive, and language expression have the greatest potential for maximizing the child's intellectual growth. In assessing the language development of dialect-speaking poverty children we have come to recognize oral expression as a reflection of a system of cognitive processes--that these children are not deprived of such systems but that they have different systems. Approaches to teaching oral expression in early childhood include the use of the dictated story, puppets, sentence repetition, play, dramatization, dance, field trips, and singing. Materials designed for rhythmic-physical involvement include rhymes, jingles, dramas, pictures, and chalk boards. The teacher must accept the child's dialect, but also provide a model of Standard English for her students. (AL)

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ORAL LANGUAGE

expression of thought

Nicholas Anastasiow

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eric Interpretive paper

Oral language: expression of thought

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There are a number of teachers and administrators who have taught me a great deal about children. I would like to gratefully dedicate this paper to them, particularly Pauline S. Sears, Genevieve Bondurant, Besse Bolton, Roberta Anastasiow, Henry Gunn, Robert L. West, and the late Lucille M. Nixon.

Nicholas Anastasiow

A three-year-old sat on the floor, his legs stretched straight in front of him as only the very young can manage. He held a large book in his lap and "read," "The horsie said, 'Come and give me a ride.' I ride horsie far away until I'm all gone. I'm all gone, gone away." The mother smiled proudly even though the child was holding the brightly colored book with a picture of a horse on the cover upside down. Was this child reading? If by the term reading we mean decoding print or graphemics on a page into oral production, the answer is clearly no. If by reading is meant obtaining meaning from the print presented before us, the answer is still no, for the child was remembering and repeating elements of the story he had heard his mother read. Probably the child was stimulated or cued by the picture of the page and "read" the pictures.

The example is not as frivolous as might appear at first glance. It's a very pertinent one for the thesis that is to be presented in this brief overview of the relationship between language development and learning how to read. The three-year-old described above had mastered some critical skills. He was demonstrating an awareness that books contain a story; he was recalling that this book contained a specific story about a horse; and he was personalizing that story into his own life and way of thinking. Basically the point of view espoused in this paper is that all learning begins by something happening inside the child—that is the child acts upon what is presented in terms of his own experience, his own needs, and his own feelings about himself.

Much of his reaction is expressed through his oral language. Therefore, his oral language becomes an important indicator of his ability to conceptualize and thus of his ability to learn to read. But because oral language is such a readily identified communication medium, it is often given more importance in assessing and developing a child's intellectual development and reading readiness than it deserves. Oral language must be interpreted with caution and understanding. It is only a part of the total development of the child.

Total development involves a child's self-concept, his cognitive development, his relationship with peers and adults, and his language

development. The child's feelings about himself determine how comfortable he is in school, how well he performs, and how much control he feels over his own actions. His thinking or cognitive processes determine his capacity to learn. His relationships with peers and adults determine his interpersonal relations. And his language provides a means of structuring the world into a symbol system.

Although it is important to remember that language can be both nonverbal, i.e., the sign language of the deaf and body language, and verbal, the focus of this paper is on oral language. For our purposes, oral language means speech or what a child says that can be heard, interpreted, and understood. Speech is an external expression of internal thought. But speech is only a sample of the development a child has attained. What a child says depends upon what he wants to say, how much he wants to say, what level of intellectual development he has attained, how secure he is with himself as a person, how much he trusts you as a teacher, and how well he understands what is going on.

What a child says is only the content of his oral language. The meaning must be communicated through his word choice and sentence structure, and they depend upon the language system of his culture or subculture. It is obvious that English children speak English and that French children speak French; it may not be so obvious that subgroups within cultures speak a variant of the dominant language. For example, there is ample evidence that black inner-city children and economically less-favored whites in rural sections of America speak a variant of standard English. These subgroup languages are well developed and conform to a regular pattern as does standard English. But they are often misinterpreted as indications of a child's poor language facility, his poor cognitive development, or his lack of readiness to learn to read.

Judith Guskin's (1968) research is a dramatic example of the negative effects of a child's dialect. She had teachers rate two samples of children's language. Both samples contained exactly the same content. One sample was read by a white middle-class youngster, the second by a black. The teachers rated the black reader

as belligerent, delinquent, and retarded. They rated the white reader as coming from a poor environment and a troubled home. Often a child's phonological and morphological production is interpreted as if intelligence can be inferred accurately from the way words are pronounced in discourse and the way sentences are structured.

McNeill (1969), a linguist, suggested that phonology and morphology are the peripheral aspects of a child's language and cannot serve as an adequate assessment of his communication skills, much less his intellectual functioning.

It is vital that you as teachers be aware of the danger of misinterpreting a child's language development because he speaks a variant language, and it is vital that you obtain an accurate sample of his language in order to correctly appraise his level of cognitive development and to further his language growth as preparation for learning to read.

This paper is intended to clarify the issue by explaining how a child learns and how his language development is related to his motor, emotional, and cognitive development. It explains the problems peculiar to children who speak black or poverty English. And it suggests ways of assessing a child's development and of further developing his language facility and thus his readiness to read.

As noted earlier, oral language always refers to speech; it does not mean reading aloud. That is another topic.

How a child learns

Motor development

A primary-grade teacher who is trying to teach a child to read may find it hard to remember that the child has already had a long history as a learner. He is born with at least two well-developed physical skills. One is the sucking response, the other the thrashing response. He also perceives, and it has been demonstrated that the child of one day of age can be trained to respond to a colored circle as well as to noise. Lewis Lipsitt (1963) of Brown University has conducted an extensive series of studies which indicate that the new-born infant is capable of learning and engages in learning from the time of birth. Piaget (1969) maintains that the basic intelligence of the child is constructed by the child during the early months, a period he calls the sensorimotor period. Through the child's perceptions and experiences, internal structures are developed. It is with these internal representations that the child learns to interpret (or think about) the world.

Psychologists believe that the child, before three months of age, has a primitive view of his environment. For the first month-and-a-half his hand does not grasp objects, his visual focusing is limited to lights or large colored objects such as circles and squares. By four months the infant can distinguish between a bottle and a pacifier. He will grasp an object that is placed in his hand. By eight months he will be able to reach, grasp, pull up, select a larger box from a smaller box. Up to this period the child acts as if an object were not there when it is hidden. At eight to ten months he appears to realize that objects such as a block are still there if they are hidden by a cloth or cushion. The ten-month-old child will move the cushion or rug to find the toy.

These activities of reacting, grasping, pulling, finding reveal that the child has learned about size, has learned to coordinate his vision and hands, can infer causality (the object is there but hidden) and that the child is beginning to develop thinking which exhibits his awareness of space, time, form, size, and objects. These thinking

processes are developed through the child's activities and his active exploration of things in his environment.

According to Piaget (1969) these thinking processes continue to develop up to the age of 12 and beyond, when the child can deal with complex abstract thinking. However, for the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on what the child has accomplished up to the age of six, the time when reading is usually introduced in schools.

By the time he is two, a child has gained from his experience with objects an awareness of concepts such as cow, table, and ball. By three he can deal with classes of concepts such as Joe is a man like my father; the pet dog is a dog like other dogs. He can also make inferences. Berlyne (1965) gives the example of Johnny, a three-year-old, who watched with interest his father shaving. The next morning while he was eating breakfast he heard the water running in the bathroom. He pointed toward the ceiling and said to his mother, "Daddy shaving."

By the time children reach the five- to six-year-old period their thinking shifts from a personal orientation to a conceptual one. That is, the child changes from thinking in terms of events happening by personal causation (as Piaget states one child said the sun was lit by a man with a match and a long arm) to awareness of the world in more realistically conceptual terms. The six-year-old still has difficulty with abstractions such as time, but he can handle concepts and symbol systems such as print. To Piaget it is no surprise that schools are teaching reading around six years of age.

Emotional development

It has been noted that the child develops perceptually and cognitively through his motor systems, i.e., the child is active and through these activities he learns. It would appear then that motor and physical activity are crucial for full intellectual development. The child's need to explore the environment and to manipulate objects appears to be critical up to the time of language development and beyond.

These conditions are equally true for the full self-development of the child. His early experiences are the foundations of his emotional life. Psychologists believe the child at birth has no conception of himself as a person. However, as he thrashes and learns to reach, grasp, and pull he also learns about his body and about his ability to control his environment. Probably the first learning for most children is that crying brings food and that food is brought by someone outside himself. The child learns to differentiate himself from his mother by six months of age. This awareness of himself as an individual is the beginning of his self-concept. But his emotional development is a long process greatly influenced by his contact with others.

It is known from studies of infants that a child who has a severely deprived or disturbed environment early in life may not develop normally. Bowlby's (1970), Spitz's (1946), Heinicke's (1956), and Anna Freud's (1941) studies have indicated that insufficient stimulation, handling, and interaction with a mothering figure can result in a normal child's regression into mental retardation or even in his death. Pavenstedt's (1970) research has shown that three-year-olds reared in disturbed families have difficulty relating to others, have little facility for protecting themselves from harm, and have little success in school. Studies summarized by Hunt (1961) also indicate the negative effects of the deprived environment on a child.

Although the effects of deprivation may not always manifest themselves in such extremes as those just cited, they do seem evident in a child's emotional development. For example, Skodak (Skodak and Skeels, 1949) after a 30-year study of a group of adopted and unadopted orphans found the adopted children to be more economically, academically, and socially successful than the unadopted ones.

A child's success seems directly related to his self-concept. Sears (1940) has shown that a child's past success affects what he will attempt to do. Low-achieving children give up or are entirely unrealistic in what they feel they will be able to do. In the Sears study, a large bag was hung from the ceiling in a nursery school

classroom. The bag could be lowered or raised. Children were given a stick and asked to have the bag raised or lowered to the level at which they thought they could hit it. Children who were rated as successful, mature, and well adjusted by their teachers set very realistic expectations for themselves. They had the bag raised or lowered so that they tended to maximize their successes and tried to make the task harder after each success. In a word, they were very realistic. Children who were rated as unsuccessful and/or immature by their teachers fell into two groups. One group tended to have the bag hung so low as never to fail. The other group had the bag raised so high that they failed at each attempt but still persisted in their unrealistic expectations.

Research has also established a relationship between self-concept and reading success. Anastasiow (1964) found that very bright youngsters who were reading below grade expectations had significantly lower self-concept scores than those who were achieving as expected. In a later study, Anastasiow (1967) found that the negative evaluation of self was more general for girls reading below grade level than for boys who were poor readers, although low achieving boys also rated themselves lower than achieving boys. It was also found that children who were poor readers rated low on many personality dimensions (Anastasiow, 1963).

Suffice it to say that the stability of a child's emotional life will affect his total development, particularly his language development. Language, which is first manifested orally around age one, seems most vulnerable to emotional interference, and at age two when most children make rapid language growth, the emotionally abnormal child is very uncommunicative. Infantile autism is most apparent to parents when the autistic child at approximately age two fails to use language normally. (The children in Heinicke's 1956 study area were hospitalized at two, stopped talking, and appeared to regress in their skill development.) Emotional development accompanies physical, cognitive, and language development.

Language development

Only recently did it occur to research psychologists that a child learns to hear speech. Obviously the child hears at birth; this fact can be observed by the child's response to a loud noise. Obviously he also begins very early to distinguish voices from other sounds in the home. This fact can be observed as he turns his head toward the sound of the voice.

However, a major accomplishment occurs around five months of age when the child begins to determine that speech sounds contain meaning. Consider for a moment the magnitude of this learning. From the vast array of voices, intonation, modalities, and rhythm the five-month-old child begins to isolate sound patterns into meaningful structures. The six-month-old child can easily recognize the words *milk* or *bottle* regardless of whether mother, father, sister, or baby sitter says the word.

This accomplishment illustrates a basic principle of development. Identification precedes performance. Before a child says a word, such as *milk*, he has learned to recognize the word and understand its meaning. This principle is also true in learning to read. Before a child can read, he has to learn that speech sounds can be represented by print or that print or letters have sound values. It has been demonstrated that if a child does not learn that speech sounds convey meaning by the age of five years he may never learn this skill. Fortunately such cases are rare.

Once a child learns that speech contains meaning, word acquisition and sentence construction follow rapidly. First to appear are one-word sentences such as "Daddy" when the child hears a car door slam, meaning "Daddy has come home." Two-word sentences appear next; "Me go," "Jane won't" are typical. Some children skip rapidly into complex sentences. The following gives a brief overview of the major accomplishments in speech as adapted from Lenneberg (1967):

> Coos at 12 weeks; turns head to search for speaker at 16 weeks; babbles sounds that resemble one-syllable utterances at six months; begins to differentiate between words at 10 months; has definite

repertoire of words at 18 months; has vocabulary of 50 items at two years; produces many three- and five-word utterances at 30 months; has 1,000-word vocabulary at three years; has well-established language at four years.

Most English-speaking children master passive voice by age six when they can utilize the phonological and morphological rules of English. McNeill (1969) points out that the Russian language has more complex phonological structures than English, and the Russian child does not master these structures until about seven. Russian children begin school at seven, while English and American children begin at six. Thus, McNeill feels the child's mastery of the phonological and morphological structures of the language are the key to the culture's and the school's determination as to when he has attained readiness to read.

In any case, research supports the relationship between oral language development and reading success. Hildreth's (1964) summary indicates that:

1) Words children use in their own speech are easier to read in print than words they do not use.

2) The richness of the child's language is related to reading success.

3) Deficient readers are deficient in oral language.

4) Speech defects are related to reading problems.

Kirk (1940) suggests that a child cannot excel in reading without a good oral language foundation. And it has been demonstrated that speech therapists' ratings of children's articulation and spontaneous verbal fluency identified 75 percent of those children who were unsuccessful in reading achievement whether they were taught by "look-say" or by a linguistic method (Anastasiow, 1965, 1966). These studies demonstrate the relationship of oral language to reading success. That is, good readers appear to have well-developed language systems.

The child who at five months learns that speech sounds contain meaning, does exactly that; he *learns* that from all the sounds present in his environment, speech sounds contain meaning. That is, he uses some cognitive or thinking function to master this skill. In this paper the argument of whether or not language development is an innate capacity of man is avoided. The discussion is limited to what learning language represents. Whether a child is English or French, he appears to learn the arbitrary grouping of sounds that stand for a word such as *dog*. The ability to say it may be innate, but he must learn what the specific symbolic representation is for the four-legged creature he perceives—whether the perception be called *dog, chien, hund,* or *cane*. This mastery is a cognitive mastery, and his speech is a sample of both cognitive mastery and language development. The same is true of reading. A child learns the letter-sound correspondence, but he must also bring meaning to the words he reads. If he does not, he will not be a successful reader.

Children's unique sayings often reveal more clearly their learnings than do their accurate statements. Consider the five-year-old who told his parent, "The principal is going to show us how to make holes with fire tomorrow." This boy knew how to use his father's drill to make holes. What his teacher had said was, "The principal told me that tomorrow we are going to have a fire drill." The child's language was reflecting his experience and thinking.

You as teachers are familiar with youngsters who have specialized knowledge derived from extensive home experiences. These children often are assessed to be brighter than they are because their accomplishments are overestimated as a result of the unique vocabulary they possess, just as the poverty, shy, or black child's ability is often underestimated by his failure to produce standard form.

The important point being stressed here is this: What the child says may reflect how he thinks, but what he doesn't say does not necessarily reflect that he is not thinking, that he is thinking poorly, or that he cannot think at all.

Oral language: expression of thought

In summary, the preceding discussion of motor, emotional, and language development presents the idea that a child's cognitive functioning is directly related to his motor, emotional, and language growth. In each of these areas, he moves from gross and loosely differentiated states to more and more finely differentiated systems. Some brief examples will help summarize these similarities.

	Motor	Emotional	Cognition	Language
0-1 month	Thrashing, sucking	No awareness of "I"	Turning toward light	Turning toward noise
2 years	Walking and climbing	I gonna, I do	Object constancy	One-word sentences
5 years	Running, skipping, jumping	I and you	Concept mastery	Passive voice

The rhythmic and motoric nature of learning

We have briefly traced a child's motor, emotional, language, and cognitive development. We have also suggested that each area plays a role in his learning to read. Now let's consider the importance of rhythm in all of this.

Theory. In 1964 Drake demonstrated that rhythm and reading success are related. But just why they are related had not been clear until recently, when psychologists studying memory and thinking made some interesting findings. Neisser (1967) suggested that the key to how humans remember, i.e., memory, may be in the rhythmic nature of how information is stored. Broadbent (1965) in describing how information is understood and stored suggested that the central processing agent, wherever it might be located in the brain, acts upon an incoming message as a pattern rather than as isolated bits of syllables or single words. In short, these researchers have supported the idea of the rhythmic nature of memory and thinking.

Other researchers have carried this idea further by stating that language development is also rhythmic in nature. A linguist (Martin, 1970) has recently suggested that it is the essential rhythmic quality of speech that the child responds to and thereby decodes speech into his own language development.

Merle Karnes (1970) of the University of Illinois has done extensive work with handicapped, normal, and poverty children. From her work she has derived statements about the development of the child from ten infant scales. These statements relate to the child's total development, particularly language and cognitive functioning. Let's consider her description of the 18- to 23-month-old child, as this period is the threshold or turning point in the child's use of language as a means of expressing his thinking processes.

He "jabbers tunefully to himself at play, echoes prominent or last word addressed to him, enjoys nursery rhymes and tries to join in, attempts to sing, likes to have patterns repeated, likes to have short rhymes sung to him, is aware of sounds such as bells, whistles, clocks, responds rhythmically to music with whole body and joins two or more words in speech." (These items were derived from the Slossen's Intelligence Test, Gesell, and the Bayley Developmental scales.)

Along the way from two to five the child has also mastered new motor skills. He usually has learned to run backwards, jump, pick up pins, eat with a fork, play interactive games, and walk on tiptoe by three years of age; by four, he enjoys rhythm and repetition, catches a bounced ball, hops on one foot, and has well-patterned inflection. The five- to six-year-old can run lightly on his toes, skip on alternate feet, dance to music, balance on a narrow path, draw a triangle, and trace a diamond; he also continues domestic and dramatic play.

In essence, the five- to six-year-old has integrated his emotional, language, thinking, motoric, and interpersonal skills into a unity that is a functioning whole—ready for academic tasks. He reveals in each milestone along the way the rhythmic and motoric nature of how he accomplishes these skills.

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Theory application in curriculum development. Is this a new view? Not completely. Progressive and modern educators as a result of their work with and observation of children had intuitively arrived at curriculum procedures which stressed the importance of rhythm before the research evidence was available to support their practices.

Some programs, however, have focused on only one part of the child's development, and lest you be misled into believing that simplistic miracle methods lead to reading readiness, it seems advisable to discuss them briefly here. Although these programs may result in the child's mastering some accomplishment, their success is probably a result of tapping into the underlying system of rhythm. One such program emphasizes motor skill development. Certainly motor skill development is an essential element in total child development, but the "creepy-crawly" schools misperceive the underlying role of rhythm in motor development as well as the relationship of self-concept, language, and thinking skills to this development. These programs stress physical involvement in isolation of social-emotional-linguistic development. Another type of program with narrow emphasis is the "drill and practice words" groups which stress acquisition of words in isolation from motor-social-emotional-linguistic development. Both programs do provide experiences which involve the child, but they do not develop the total child.

Other programs, however, do have a broader emphasis. They stress the importance of rhythm in learning, and they attempt to develop the total child. Many of them do this through emphasis on play and dance.

Anthropologists have long contended that man through play expresses his conceptions of the universe and his relations to the world. Further, Bateson and Mead (1942) also have stressed the idea that man expresses through play and dance those basic elements of his nature that his culture has socialized him to not express. They believe that forms of joy, sorrow, hate, envy, and aggression can be expressed in drama and dance that cannot be displayed openly in the daily interactions of a group. The Balinese, for example, are a highly restrained group of people. They rarely express human emotions in

interpersonal relations. Their festivals, however, include expressive, excessively vigorous and at times violent emotions, resulting in the dancers falling into a trance state. Dance, a form of "play," can be a release of inner tensions and feelings that do not have other means of expression.

According to these theories, play is a manifestation of cognitive structures. Once these nonverbal-cognitive structures are developed, play becomes a means of making them external.

But play is also a means of developing cognitive structures. And, for you as a teacher, this is a very important fact. According to Piaget (1969), the basic development of thinking processes is motoric. Piaget has described how all children go through stages of play as means of developing their conceptual thinking. According to Neisser (1967), the basic elements of thinking are rhythmic and motoric. Therefore, meaning or understanding can be accomplished by the child in play.

Modern educators recognize that structured play allows for learning. In addition, these modern educators recognize that children in play give you, the teacher, evidence or examples of what they have accomplished. When you observe a child in play, you observe the learning that he has accomplished, and you also observe his poorly developed concepts. For example, a child acting out fireman may call for a resuscitator but at the same time not understand the term *overcome with smoke* and its accompanying concepts. The child following the play experience usually will verbalize the new learnings revealed through his play. He may reveal his knowledge of what firemen do and construct the complex idea that men develop and perform specialized roles in modern society according to the work they perform. The child, however, in initial reading will be able to decode only those specific words he has already mastered in his own language and will recognize only those ideas he has already learned. Play in this sense provides the foundations necessary for the child to learn how to read. This is not a new idea, this is essentially Hymes' (1955) notion of the role of experience in reading.

Let us now take this notion of the role of play in learning one step further. It has been asserted that through play the child becomes physically involved; he is able to act out and reveal what he already has accomplished, to recognize for himself what he does not know, and to reveal to you his strengths and needs. In addition, play is an opportunity for the child to express his nonverbal intelligence activity so as to enable him to attach verbal symbols to these knowledges. By attaching verbal symbols to nonverbal activity the child takes great steps toward readiness for conceptual reasoning and readiness for formal reading programs.

Reconsider for a moment the earlier point that play is a motoric-rhythmic means of learning. *Dance*, then, is an expression which establishes for the child the essential unity to integrate and consolidate his growing competencies.

The open education concept is popular and current. It focuses on the human values of the child and helps him to accomplish the complex set of abilities related to efficient thinking, i.e., classification, conservation of mass, volume, energy, measurement, and problem-solving techniques.

However, what is commonly overlooked in a description of the open school is the critical role of dance and movement experiences as an essential aspect of the curriculum. Dance and movement experiences are not incidental activities in this system but planned structured experiences similar to the place math experiences have in American education, that is, math is planned and structured into the curriculum. Guppy (1965) has described their importance as follows:

> Creation, therefore, one might define as a form of thinking in which the hands or some other means are used as extensions of the brain, with which to fix images and solve problems—an elaboration in man of the brain's prime role in maintaining the organism in security. And a finished creation is a projection of some part of the creators' inner model of reality. . . . For some people . . . words and signs provide the imageries most important to them; for others sounds, shapes, patterns, colors, taste, smells, sense of touch, physical movement . . . (p. 51)

Guppy's statement is similar to the assertion made earlier in this paper. Play, which is observed in the one-day infant as a rhythmic activity and which is described by Piaget and Inhelder (1969) as an attempt to seek pleasure and avoid pain, grows into a means of the child's learning about his environment, learning concepts, learning roles. Play also becomes a means of expressing nonverbal learnings and communication. Finally, dance and play have a social nature, and they become a means by which children relate to each other. These activities involve the total child; through them his motor, emotional, language, and cognitive development increases. Through them he learns.

Some American educators have maintained outcomes of movement, dance, and art experiences similar to those of the English Open School leaders. These Americans have asserted that artistic expression is a means whereby a child accomplishes academic goals, specifically reading success.

Natalie Cole (1940) in her book, *Arts in the Classroom*, described how a class of Mexican-American and poverty children with poorly developed academic skills gained success in school-related skills through experiences with art and dance. Cole encouraged these children to express their thoughts and feelings through painting or dancing. She also encouraged the children to write and talk about these expressions. Gertrude Copley Knight, mentioned in the Cole book, is one who espouses the role of dance as an integrating experience. Her film *Building Children's Personality Through Creative Dance* (1954) demonstrates how children can move from inhibited, clumsy, awkward expressions in dance to secure and graceful youth. Her techniques are simple and although not derived directly from research evidence are consistent with newer findings. She rewards a movement of the child and never punishes or shames him in dance. She, through her own dancing, demonstrates (or models) for the child but does not expect or desire the child to imitate her dancing *per se*. The child is encouraged to construct his own movement to the music. The encouragement of each child's interpretation is the key to Mrs. Knight's success. The child's

interpretation and attachment of movement to music is not different from the child's interpretation and attachment of meaning to speech sounds or to the concepts that clay is conserved when broken into bits, that letters have sound values, or that 2+2 makes 4. Interpreting is a manifestation of the inner thinking of the child.

It would appear that the common element that draws the cognitive psychologists, such as Neisser and Piaget, to these intuitive educators, Cole and Knight, and to modern curriculum constructors such as Karnes (1970), Gray and Klaus (1965), and Weikert (1969) is the premise contained in each of their work: all knowledge is constructed by the child based on his own activity. Cole and Knight as well as the English educators further assert that dance and movement consolidate learnings and provide the essential integrating experience the child requires for later academic tasks.

In summary, this discussion has suggested that all learning is basically motoric in nature and that speech is a manifestation of thinking and language development; activities which involve the total child in his emotional, motor, cognitive, and language expressions have the potential of maximizing his intellectual development to the heights available to him at his birth.

Oral language development, reading readiness, and black or poverty English

Keeping in mind the facts (1) that language development is only one aspect of a child's total development, (2) that it is influenced by and influences each of the other areas of development, i.e., motor, emotional, and cognitive, (3) that it should not be stressed in isolation but rather developed in conjunction with the other areas, and (4) that oral language is only one part of total language development, let us now consider the special problems of oral language development and reading readiness in a child who speaks black or nonstandard English.

The early literature in the 1960's was replete with suggestions that the poverty child was deficient in language development (Deutsch, 1965). It was postulated that the poverty child's deficien-

cies stemmed from harsh punishment in the home, the different parent training methods used, poor diet, excessive noise in the home, and mental deficiency. Gradually researchers began to realize that the language of the poverty and black groups was not so deficient as it was different. Linguists were the first to break through with the "different" hypothesis. They maintained that any language which functionally serves its members is a viable and sufficient language. Linguists working in ghettos in New York, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. began to collect remarkably similar data. Black English, as it was called, was a well-developed variant of standard English. Its rules were uniform and consistent, but they contained elements which were drastically different from standard English.

One of the most obvious differences is really a surface one. It is the use of standardly rejected forms such as *ain't got* for *don't have, he don't* for *he doesn't, ain't,* and *got.* These forms often give the incorrect impression that a child is intellectually inferior. For example, a black child might say, "Dat bird done brung lots of grass to dat tree." The language of the child is different from standard English, but it is of a consistent form and reflects the child's thinking. The thinking revealed in the sentence is the same as if he had said, "The bird is taking grass to the tree." (Rhodes, 1970).

The major points of difference between black and standard English appear in the set of rules used for verb declensions, copula usage, negative rules, pronominal opposition, /r/ and /l/ deletion, consonant cluster reduction, and devoicing of a word in a final stop consonant. For example, a black or poverty child will say *he* for *he'll, do* for *does, got hit* for *was hit, before you eat* for *before eating, look at* for *watch, did he did* for *if he did.*

Thus a black child when decoding black English hears different markers around which he obtains meaning. Neisser (1967) maintains that function words, i.e., *if, when, although,* are the key elements around which meaning is understood in a spoken sentence.

In a study with black inner-city children (Anastasiow, *et. al.*, 1969), support was sought for these beliefs that children reconstruct all auditory input. The study was designed to demonstrate also that

children who speak a variant of standard English reconstruct the standard form to conform to their own dialect. It was known from the work of Lenneberg that children when asked to repeat a well-formed sentence would only repeat the portion of the sentence that matched their level of development. Thus, if the inner-city child was deficient he would not repeat all of the well-formed sentence. If he did, he should be "normal," at least in language development. It was known also that black children were able to repeat sentences spoken in black dialect better than were white middle-class children, while white youngsters were able to repeat standard English better than black youngsters (Menyuk, 1963; Baratz, 1968; Slobin, 1967).

Twenty-three sentences that had the possibility of being reconstructed into black English were constructed by Anastasiow, *et al.* to conform to standard English. Children were asked to repeat what the experimenter said. Simple examples were used until the child understood the directions. For example, the child was asked to repeat the sentence, "The sun is shining," when the experimenter spoke it. As soon as the child understood the directions he was then asked to repeat the 23 sentences, one of which is listed below:

He runs home quickly after school because he has a bicycle to ride.

All sentences were scored for errors and for reconstruction. Reconstructions were defined as any change in the sentence that maintained meaning but changed the standard form to the black English equivalent. An example highlights the results. It was found that 41 percent of first-grade children and 42 percent of second-grade children changed the word *while* to *when* in the following sentence: "Did the accident happen while your mother was in the store?" Similar data were obtained in other sentences. The children, with very little delay in response, modified what they were asked to repeat to conform to their own language.

Because black or poverty English is different from standard English, it is easy to misinterpret a child's oral language development. His speech is often viewed as an indication of poorly developed language and thinking abilities rather than as only a different language. His reading readiness and his learning potential are also

often misjudged as a result of his performance on standardized measuring instruments. For example, Timmy, a poverty child in North Carolina, was erratic, uncontrollable, and in almost every respect except physical development, judged by his teachers and the staff to be immature and "un" ready for school. He was a handful, and his wild running, skipping, jumping, hitting drove the teacher and researchers to their limits. They failed to recognize that his well-developed sense of rhythm and motor abilities were a cue to his innate ability and that he was not as slow as they suspected. He was administered a Stanford-Binet which indicated that he was mentally retarded. When he was asked to respond to the Peabody Language Development Kit he pointed out objects in the picture rather than telling a story. However, one day as he sat pounding on the piano he began to sing a song, the text of which follows. (The observer did not write the dialect that the child spoke, but the reader can almost "hear" the dialect in the rhythm of the song.)

The horse jumped, zoom
The boy jumped, zoom
The boy and the horse jumped
Zoom, zoom, zoom.

The horse jumped, zoom
The boy jumped, zoom
The horse and the boy jumped
Zoom, zoom, zoom.

Come on baby
Sing about me.
Come on baby
Sing about me.
I'm singing about me
Come on baby, sing about me.

Let's go baby
Sing about me.
Let's go baby
Sing about me.

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Baby, baby, ba ba baby
Come on baby, zoom, zoom, zoom.

Come on baby
Sing about me.
Come on daughter
Sing about the girl.
Come on baby
Sing about me.
Sing about the bottle
Come on baby
Let's go get married
Let's go get married
But don't put me in jail or
I'll knock you down with the telephone
And put you out
Pow, pow, pow
I'm dead.

This was a child who the teachers and project personnel felt had underdeveloped language and poorly developed thinking processes. Clearly, his training to be "task oriented" and his preparation to respond to the demands of school were poor. These were foreign skills to him. School was a strange and hostile environment, as was his neighborhood if his song was any indication. However, his vocabulary, his concept of what tone is, and his rhythm were sufficiently mature to enable the teacher to build an appropriate program for his school success. His language reflected his emotional life and his conceptual development.

In accurately assessing a black or poverty child's language development, you as a teacher must remember that the oral response of many such children is limited because the child is unaware of the importance of oral production. His culture does not always emphasize or reward verbalization; therefore, he may possess an undeveloped expressed language facility. The fact that he speaks little does not mean that he cannot speak. Thus, the key to reading success for such youngsters is not writing basic readers in dialect as some

maintain but training these children in auditory discrimination to enable them to match the standard form as spoken in the classroom with their own language. Teaching techniques should begin at the child's current level of functioning and should allow him a positive evaluation of himself by not rejecting his language while involving him in activities (clapping, dancing, catching, dramatization) that enable him to master the standard language.

Verifying one approach is not the issue here. The Cooper, *et al.* (1966), Weikart (1969), Karnes, *et al.* (1970), and Gray and Klaus (1965) approaches all have demonstrated success with poverty youth. As Weikart suggests, the method of success, in fact, depends upon the teacher's belief in the approach the teacher uses. What appears to be important is that the approaches that are most successful are those that are cognitively oriented. A cognitive approach is one in which instruction is geared to encourage the child to actively construct the experience presented in class in terms of his current level of competency. Children must be allowed to experience those elements they are to learn, for that is the way learning takes place. The speech of the child is a sample of what he knows, no more, no less, and his oral language is the base on which teachers can build a curriculum.

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Teaching techniques and materials

Because a child's language development is influenced by and influences his motor, emotional, and cognitive development, because each of these areas is related to rhythm, and because the development of each of them is related to a child's ability to learn to read, classroom techniques designed to develop oral language in preparation for reading should include activities that simultaneously develop these other areas as well.

The techniques and materials included in this section are designed to do this. In the discussion of each, special emphasis is placed on their use in assessing and developing the oral language of children who speak black or poverty English.

Specific techniques for assessment

Before specific developmental activities can be initiated for a child, it is necessary to assess his level of language and cognitive development. This can be done in various ways. However, as indicated earlier, it is all too easy to misinterpret a child's use of a "different" language or his hesitancy to use any verbal language as a sign of immature cognitive development. Regardless of the choice of assessment techniques, care must be taken to assure an accurate measurement.

The dictated story. The dictated story technique is simple and effective. Briefly, the child is allowed to draw or paint a picture. He then is encouraged to "tell a story" about his picture. He may tell his story directly to an aide, parent, or teacher who writes it down. The adult may directly "chart" the story while the child is speaking, or he may write it down and give it back to the child later. Giving the child his own story, even though he cannot read, develops several important skills for the child and assists the teacher:

1) It helps encourage the child to use his own language fully.

2) It gives the teacher some behavioral evidence of the child's language and thinking.

3) It is a warm and supportive environment for the child and encourages his acceptance of himself.

4) It helps the child recognize that what he says can be written down.

5) It directly leads to the awareness that print has sound values.

6) It directly leads to the awareness that print can be read.

Large charts can be prepared for the whole class to read. The class as a group can dictate a story that:

1) Summarizes what was presented in sharing and gives the teacher evidence of what was processed and what was remembered, i.e., John has new shoes. Mary has a baby brother.

2) Summarizes a story or news item a child told during sharing more fully.

3) Summarizes an activity in the classroom, i.e., the teacher brings in a bird's nest and the class talks about it. Children then write (dictate) a story about it.

4) Rewrites a story read to the class in the child's own words. The teacher then checks for the sequence of what was remembered.

5) Presents on a chart words of a song that the class has learned.

Puppets. Puppets are excellent motivating devices for children's speech. Cooper (1964) uses a puppet as a symbol of communication activities. The Peabody Language Kit includes animal puppets. Many teachers have learned through experience that a child who is reluctant to talk to an adult will speak to a hand puppet. (Puppets can be made from many simple materials; for example, colored paper figures can be glued to tongue depressers or popsicle sticks.)

After the puppet has been made, ask the child to have the puppet tell a story. Have the child tell a story that has already been presented to the class, i.e., "Billy Goats Gruff." Listen to the child's presentation and check for: (1) ability to recall story, (2) ability to see sequence, (3) ability to find detail, (4) ability to make inferences, and (5) ability to see relationships. This technique is one way teachers can assess the level of a child's cognitive functioning.

Sentence repetition. A teacher may be willing to accept a child's dialect, but he must also attempt to provide a model of standard English. He must then be a skilled diagnostician to separate immature production from dialectical differences. This is an extremely difficult task. The sentence repetition task is one technique. Encouraging production in rhymes and jingles is another. Songs and dictated stories give further samples of the child's language.

It is the teacher's responsibility to select appropriate experiences on which to base a diagnosis. Presenting a series of songs such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and "Mary Had a Little Lamb" may be diagnostic but may fail to reveal specific deficits in /r/ and /l/ deletions which are common in black dialect and /r/ and /l/ which are common problems in every kindergarten class as in the confusion of *r* and *w* as in *wing* for *ring*.

The lists that are presented below (the first three of which were taken from Slobin, 1967) have been developed for research purposes with the very young child. The child is asked simply to repeat what the instructor says. Brown and Fraser's sentences are designed for three- to four-year-olds. Menyuk's for a similar age. Children of these ages should be able to complete the entire group of sentences. If a child eliminates a portion of any sentence, you might assume that he has not moved to that level. These are experimental procedures and you must interpret the results generously. Lenneberg's (1967) work gives a complete description of normal language development.

Brown and Fraser's Sentences

I showed you the book.
I am very tall.
It goes in a big box.
Read the book.
I am drawing a dog.
I will read the book.
I can see a cow.
I will not do that again.
I do not want an apple.
Do I like to read books?
Is it a car?
Where does it go?
Where shall I go?

Menyuk's Sentences

Transformation Type	Sentence
Passive	He got tied up.
Negative	He isn't a good boy.
Question	Are you nice?
Contraction	He'll be good.
Inversion	Now I have kittens.
Relative Question	Where are you going?
Imperative	Don't use my dough.
Pronominalization	There isn't any more.
Separation	He took it off.
Got	I've got a lollipop.
Auxiliary Be Placement	He is not going to the party.
Auxiliary Have Placement	I've already been there.
Do	I did read the book.

Possessive	I'm writing daddy's name.
Reflexive	I cut myself.
Conjunction	Peter is over here and you are over there.
Conjunction Deletion	I see a red book and a blue book.
Conjunction If	I'll give it to you if you want it.
Conjunction So	He saw him so he hit him.
Conjunction Because	He'll eat the ice cream becaue he wants to.

Gleitman, Shipley, and Smith's sentences evolve from ones that are easy to imitate to ones difficult to imitate.

Gleitman, Shipley, and Smith's Sentences

A Structures (easy to imitate)

Number	Two of the marbles rolled away.
Conjunction	Sam and Ronny built their house.
Complement	I want to play the piano.

B Structures (difficult to imitate)

Adjective	They played with long yellow blocks.
Verbal Auxiliary	Daddy may have missed the train.
Relative	The lady who sneezes is sick.
Conjunction Inversion	Not George but Danny came along.

The Anastasiow, *et. al.* (1969) sentences are those designed to elicit reconstructions from white standard to black and poverty English. The correct sentence and its acceptable equivalent are given below.

Sentence	*Reconstruction*
He was tied up.	got

Oral language: expression of thought

She isn't a good singer.
ain't no

She said, "Whose toys are those? "
say

Jim, who tried to escape, was caught and then beaten up.
got

Although I want ice cream, I bet I'm not going to get any.
ain't gonna

The boy was hit by the girl who jumped rope in the street.
got

Joe is good when he feels like it.
be teel

The black child who changes the sentence to conform to his language is demonstrating normal cognitive functioning but presenting his product in a dramatically different form. These reconstructions may then be perceived inaccurately by teachers as errors rather than as the child's remarkable display of being able to process a different form of language while maintaining meaning. It is suggested that the child's reconstructions are examples of an active intelligence from which the teacher may build a strong readiness program. Evidence that the child can reconstruct, rather than omit, would indicate he can understand a different form of English. Therefore, there is no need to change the child's speech to enhance understanding. Instead, you as the teacher should master his language as well as provide ample opportunites for him to hear and process standard forms. By so doing, you provide speakers of nonstandard form with experiences that help them readily recognize a word's written form as well as its oral form.

Suggestions for developmental instruction

Once a child's level of language and cognitive development has been determined, instruction begins. As with assessment, various approaches are possible. Those discussed here are based on the

theories presented earlier; therefore, several points should be reviewed and discussed before continuing.

First, play is perceived as an integral part of any preschool or kindergarten program. As one kindergarten teacher so aptly put it, toys are the tools with which children think. The discussion gave examples of the importance of play and the role it serves in developing thinking processes.

Second, dramatization of stories, songs, or rhymes is another major activity for any preschool or kindergarten program. Teachers may select from a wide range of readily available material to serve for dramatization. The important point is to plan systematic and frequent experiences. Dramatization engages the child in thinking, the most critical activity of all school experiences. Puppets and finger plays add a rich dimension to dramatization.

Third, dance can be a daily activity. Responding to, moving with the beat of a drum, records, or songs are cultural expressive experiences. There is a large variety of records to choose from, many of which are prepared specifically for classroom free dance. However, any type of music can do—from rock to Scottish folk songs or Bach. (Scarves are useful to encourage children's full body movement.)

Fourth, play and dramatization allow the child to be physically involved. All humans must be active, particularly the young child. It is through these activities that he learns.

Finally, multiple experiences are recommended: field trips, walks, chart stories, songs, dictated stories. It is the manner in which the teacher presents the activity and concepts to the child as he is now that is critical.

The position taken in this paper is that all learning is done by the child. It is the teacher's role to encourage, nurture, and plan for learning. Any direct attack on a child's language is a direct attack on his thinking ability which can have overwhelmingly negative effects.

Georgia Cooper's approach. Mrs. Cooper is a child development specialist who is also a trained speech therapist. Her major interest is to bring both sets of talents to bear in devising a

curriculum approach to further children's communication skills development.

In her early work she came to recognize the essential rhythmic quality of speech and the rhythmic basis of learning. Working with capable but immature children in Contra Costa County in California, she evolved an approach that today is remarkably sound in terms of current research evidence as summarized above. Only the highlights of her approach can be described here. A more complete description is found in Cooper (1964, 1968) and in Cooper and Anastasiow (1970). However, because these materials are not commercially available, they will be described in some detail below.

The program is a multisensory approach which builds upon the child's existing competencies and encourages his active participation in auditory decoding, speech production, and the formulation of analogies among the heard, spoken, and written symbol systems.

For the preschool child the written symbol is not presented, but letter names are used to characterize the sound, and the alphabet may be taught in relation to the sequence of sounds taught rather than in alphabetical sequence.

The methods and materials suggested by Cooper encourage the child's rhythmic-physical involvement (movement, clapping), using dramatization, chalk patterns, ball rhythms, jingles, and rhymes. These techniques stimulate speech production and auditory discrimination. Each child is encouraged to analyze his own speech and language by listening and speaking, so that he can be personally responsible for carrying his development forward. Lessons constructed by Cooper contain every possible consonant-vowel combination. Consonants in beginning, medial, and final positions are presented in the framework of jingles, rhymes, and single-word object identifications.

The lessons begin with "get-ready" activities which have the children focus on what is to be learned. The purpose of "getting ready" is to bring children to a listening focus. This can be accomplished in various ways: through finger plays, music, poetry, stories, or relaxation exercises related to dramatic play.

Following these initial activities, the lesson progresses through various stages. The rhyme is introduced, perhaps through a jingle. (Jingles rather than poetry are used for practice because their rhythms are more often the rhythms of bodily movement than are those of poetry.) Then stage one begins. It includes clapping and/or some type of body rhythm. The teacher chants the jingle as teacher and children clap together. Children are invited to join.

Words, preferably those ending with the consonant being experienced, are associated with hand dramatization or movement devices which aid speech production. Stage two includes large muscle and vocal involvment with the child. Specially improvised ball rhythms involve the teacher and children in throwing and catching. When children throw and catch as they chant the jingle, both their coordination and speech stability are developed.

Stage three includes chalk or pencil patterns to move the arm with the rhythm of the jingles. Chalk patterns are an exercise of adding to rhythms, movement, and verbalization the visual pattern resulting from keeping time with the chalk. It is considered a prewriting exercise by Cooper. The emphasis is on freedom of movement rather than precision. Stage four includes the teacher's production of the consonant in the context of a word, usually with an object present, i.e., pencil, paper, paper clips, or popcorn. Stage five includes lip-reading by the child and object identification. The technique of reading lips is used because it is seen as a visual stimulation—another avenue to speech production. To recognize visually the overall rhythm of speech and the shape of consonants and vowels is an aspect of discrimination that is important for all children as well as for those with dulled hearing.

Additional steps with older children (six- and seven-year-olds) include reading the jingle on a chart, tracing letters and words with their hands, and copying the charts. Auditory and vocal qualities are stressed. The movement devices are provided to stabilize production and discriminations as well as vocalization. A crucial aspect of the program is that children are not to feel any negative evaluation of self in the process of attaining the specific goals in the stages.

One sample from Cooper's lessons is given below:

Dramatizing a Jingle

Polly

Polly put some popcorn
In a big, iron pot.
Then she stirred the fire
So that it was hot.
Pop! Pop!
Poppety - pop!
Poppety! Poppety!
Pop
and
STOP!

(Make certain that the children have had experience with popcorn.)

Read the jingle with light, sure rhythm, with crisp diction, and with enjoyment. Without talking about it you are modeling the production of clear, dramatic speech.

Now the children are ready to dramatize the story in the jingle. Of course, there is no one way. The main thing is to have them participate as directly as possible. The term pot *may need to be discussed and also the kind of fire that would need stirring.*

> Who could show us how popcorn looks before it is popped? Can you be the popcorn seed? Now the fire is hot and the popcorn *pops!* Can you pop? etc.

Children are never given any information until you, the teacher, have first tried to get the information from them. In this kind of activity it is important that you not slow up the movement by too much discussion. However, when ideas for dramatization are being generated, you are encouraged not to show the children what to do. Children are helped by being stimulated to make a relevant response to what is being presented. In the beginning, at least, any relevant response is accepted. And even when the response doesn't seem relevant, there may be some association in the child's mind that makes it so to him; therefore, you should be careful even here.

The children make a circle forming the pot. Four or five (or more) are the popcorn. You will want a Polly, of course. The story in the jingle suggests the action.

A record of the children who have played the main characters is kept so that eventually all children have a chance to act while the others speak. Always stop the activity a little too soon rather than have some of the children become restless.

You are seeking a rhythm and a timing that will not tax your more immature children and yet will satisfy all of them.

Loban's approach. Loban (1968) recommends an emphasis on the child's use of dialect to express his feelings and his thinking processes. Loban encourages the teacher to accept the child's language as it is and to explore the full range of language. He encourages teachers of preschoolers to place emphasis on activities that encourage the child to talk. Tape recorders can be used to help the child focus on his own speech. They can also be used to have the child dictate his own stories. One of the major problems in working with some poverty children is that they do not talk readily. Encouraging and accepting their dialect is the first step in both assessing and developing their language.

Let's examine one of Loban's example sentences and construct a hypothetical dialogue between you and a child to demonstrate how assessment and teaching interplay.

The child pointing to a picture says:

Dat bird done brung lots of grass to dat tree.

Teacher: (Smiling)

Yes. The bird is bringing grass and twigs to the tree. What is he doing with the grass? (Recognition of child's cognitive awareness and testing children's concept of nest building.)

Child 2:

He done eat it?

Teacher:

That's one idea. Birds eat seeds so they might take grass with seeds to the tree. Do you have another idea?

Child 3:

He gonna make a nest.

Teacher:

Yes. He's making a nest. Do you know why he's making a nest?

Following these interchanges, a teacher may present a song about birds and nest building. The teacher can pick any rhyme or song to help children stabilize the pattern. Note that expansion is quite different from correction. Correction would be:

Child:

Dat bird *don brung* . . .

Teacher:

That bird *brought*. . .

with the teacher placing voice stress on *that* and *brought*. Expansion as a technique implies acceptance of the idea the child is communicating; the teacher is building on what was communicated by incorporating and expanding.

As noted earlier, a teacher may wish to accept a child's dialect, but he must also attempt to provide a model of standard English. He must be a skilled diagnostician who is constantly trying to separate immature production from dialectical differences. This is an extremely difficult task. Encouraging production in rhymes and jingles is a means of potential remediation.

However, systematic attention must be given to the range of speech sounds produced normally in connected discourse. The suggestion of presenting the alphabet letters and having children repeat them is not viewed as a fruitful technique. Cooper's jingles, the speech poem in *Talking Time* (Scott, 1951), and Ruth Jackson's *Language Experiences Kit* (1967) are but three examples of material developed for classroom use.

Summary

This paper attempts to clarify some relationships between children's language and children's thinking. The premise is simple: children's speech is a reflection of their level of development and their thinking processes. Speech can reflect the child's level of language mastery or the child's mastery of a language different from the standard system.

The child desires to please and must have information from the teacher as to how he is proceeding. Positive knowledge of results is one of the most powerful tools you have as a teacher.

The young child pressures you to consider him totally, and no other assessment of his functioning other than his total development is an accurate one. He is, like every human being, an emotional, thinking, and social being. His strengths and deficits are revealed through all of his actions. These behaviors are the bits of information upon which you as a teacher must base your instructional program.

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